



COVID-19: Top Three Scams

1 IRS/U.S. Treasury Department – Economic Impact Payment Scams

The IRS urges taxpayers to be on the lookout for scam artists trying to use the economic impact payments or COVID-19 related grants as cover for schemes to steal personal information and money. Remember, the IRS will not call, text you, email you or contact you on social media asking for personal or bank account information – even related to the economic impact payments. Also, watch out for emails with attachments or links claiming to have special information about economic impact payments or refunds. To report a scam or fraud to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration at [treasury.gov/tigta](https://www.treasury.gov/tigta) or call 1-800-366-4484.

Be aware! The COVID-19 Crisis has provided an opportunity for scammers to prey on the public. Know how to protect yourself and loved ones from these scams.

Protect Yourself:

- ❁ The IRS will not call and ask you to verify your payment details. Do not give out your bank account, debit account, or PayPal account information, even if someone claims it's necessary to get your check. It's a scam!
- ❁ If you receive a call, don't engage with scammers or thieves, even if you want to tell them that you know it's a scam. Just hang up!

2 Social Security Administration – Closing of Social Security Offices Scam

The Inspector General of Social Security, Gail S. Ennis, is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19-related office closures. Scammers may mislead beneficiaries into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency, or by mailing cash, to maintain regular benefit payments during this period of COVID-19 office closures. SSA will not suspend or discontinue benefits because their offices are closed to the public for in-person service. To report Social Security scams, use the online form, at oig.ssa.gov or call the Social Security Fraud Hotline 1-800-269-0271.

Social Security will never:

- ❁ threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action unless you pay a fine or fee;
- ❁ promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment;



- ❁ require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card;
- ❁ demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem; or
- ❁ send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

3 US Department of Health & Human Services – Medicare/COVID-19 Scam

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General is alerting the public about fraud schemes related to COVID-19. For example, scammers are offering COVID-19 tests to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal details, including Medicare information. However, the services are unapproved and illegitimate. If you suspect COVID-19 fraud, contact National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline (866) 720-5721 or [justice.gov/disaster-fraud](https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud)

Protect Yourself

- ❁ Beneficiaries should be cautious of unsolicited requests for their Medicare or Medicaid numbers.
- ❁ Be suspicious of any unexpected calls or visitors offering COVID-19 tests or supplies. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- ❁ Ignore offers or advertisements for COVID-19 testing or treatments on social media sites.
- ❁ A physician or other trusted healthcare provider should assess your condition and approve any requests for COVID-19 testing.

The NCDF is a national coordinating agency within the Department of Justice, dedicated to improving the detection, prevention, investigation, and prosecution of criminal conduct related to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies, such as the coronavirus (COVID-19). Hotline staff will obtain information regarding your complaint, which will then be reviewed by law enforcement officials.
